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March 25, 2009

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Ravalli County Commissioners

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Ravalli County Commissioners
215 4th Street, Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dear Ravalli County Commissioners:

Thank you for contacting me in support of federal legislation that will help Ravalli County complete work on a community health center.

I am happy to report that work has already begun to allocate funds from the Jobs Bill, signed into law by President Obama on February 17. I strongly supported this legislation, including a number of important public health provisions that will support community health centers.

Public health spending in the Jobs Bill includes \$500 million for health centers, \$500 million for health profession workforce shortages, and \$1.5 billion for construction, renovation, equipment, and information technology for community health centers. This legislation also provides \$1 billion for prevention and wellness programs, including immunization, reduction of health care-associated infections, and initiatives to address chronic disease rates.

As we create jobs in the short term, it is also important that we use this historic opportunity to make a down payment on some of our nation's most pressing challenges for the long term. Making sure all Americans have access to quality, affordable health care is one of these crucial issues, and improving wellness and preventive care is an important cornerstone of this effort. This investment will make Americans healthier and our workforce stronger, and it will help us save money over the long term.

As an emergency measure to rebuild our economy, the Jobs Bill supplements funding already supplied through the appropriations process. I will be sure to keep your views in mind as we move to consideration of health care reform and the appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2010. Please do not hesitate to contact me again in the future if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator

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